

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 27, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. HAMLIN made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 99.]

The committee to whom was referred the memorial of the directors of the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, and of sundry citizens of the District of Columbia, praying for the aid of Congress to said institution, have had the same under consideration and ask leave to report in part :

That the Columbia Institution was incorporated by Congress at their last session, and in the act of incorporation provision was made for payment out of the treasury of the United States of one hundred and fifty dollars per annum for the maintenance and tuition of each deaf and dumb and blind pupil properly belonging to the District of Columbia who might not be able to command the means to pay for his own support and instruction. The institution was organized under this act, and commenced with five pupils, which have since been increased to seventeen, and a further increase of the number to twenty-five, or more, is anticipated within a year to come, and within a few years to fifty or more.

Of the pupils now in the institution, fifteen are supported by the government and two by their parents.

It is obvious that one hundred and fifty dollars per annum is barely sufficient to feed and clothe indigent pupils, and even when parents or guardians furnish clothing can leave but little surplus to be applied towards the payment of salaries and other necessary expenses. To furnish the institution and pay salaries and incidental expenses thus ar, the directors and other benevolent citizens have contributed liberally, though not to an amount adequate to the object, and the pressure of the times has rendered that resource always precarious, at present unavailable ; and your committee have no doubt that it will be very difficult, if not impracticable, for the directors to carry on the institution, even in a crippled and inefficient condition, without further aid from the government.

The object is one which commands universal sympathy, as is evinced by the liberal provision which has been made for the instruction of

the deaf and dumb and the blind in Europe and America. The Congress of the United States showed their appreciation of the object, not long after the introduction of the system of mute instruction into this country, by a donation of lands to the American Asylum at Hartford, Connecticut, out of which that institution has accumulated a fund of about \$300,000. Grants of land have also been made by Congress to the deaf and dumb, as well as the insane asylums of Kentucky, and that body has provided most liberally for the insane of this District.

Many of the States have made ample provision for the instruction of these unfortunate classes of their population, by the construction of buildings, a *per capita* allowance for indigent pupils, and annual appropriations to pay salaries and meet contingencies. The amount allowed last year for board, tuition, and clothing in the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb was \$180 for each pupil, in addition to which the legislature makes a regular appropriation of \$5,000 per annum. Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina, Michigan, Texas, and, perhaps, other States, have institutions for the instruction of the deaf and dumb or of the blind, or both, which have been established and are supported, in whole or in part, by appropriations from the State treasuries.

Your committee are informed that the average cost of supporting deaf, dumb, and blind pupils in the principal State institutions, including the salaries of superintendents, matrons, teachers, and all contingencies, does not vary much from \$200 each. Where the number of pupils is small, the cost of each must be greater, for the expenses do not increase in the same proportion as the number of pupils increases.

The directors of the Columbia Institution ask an annual appropriation of \$3,000, in addition to the *per capita* allowance now provided for; and with this allowance they pledge themselves to meet all current expenses of the institution, without calling on Congress for further aid. Your committee think the object meritorious, and the request reasonable. They therefore report a bill making the allowance requested, limiting it to five years. The committee have thought it proper to introduce a section placing the deaf and dumb and blind children of persons in the military and naval service of the United States on the same footing in relation to this institution as the deaf and dumb and blind in the District of Columbia.

So much of the memorial as relates to buildings and lands your committee reserves for further consideration.

All of which is respectfully submitted.